

# THE FUTURE IS NOW!

Is now a good time to explore a new career? Launch a business? Return to school? Some University at Albany alumni, faculty and staff experts say there's never been a better time – so long as you remember that opportunity, networking and passion are all keys to a brighter future.

[www.albany.edu/cdc](http://www.albany.edu/cdc)

## Marie R. Rabideau

If you're exploring the job market, Marie R. Rabideau, associate director of Career Services ([www.albany.edu/cdc](http://www.albany.edu/cdc)), recommends that you:

**1** Revise your résumé. Career Services staff will be happy to critique it and offer suggestions for strengthening it, such as including more “industry buzzwords” and/or tailoring it to the specific kind of position you are applying for. We work very actively with our alumni to provide services that range from career counseling and coaching to résumé writing to job search.

Noah Simon, the primary contact for alumni, can be reached via e-mail at [nsimon@uamail.albany.edu](mailto:nsimon@uamail.albany.edu). By registering with Career Services via our Web site, you will gain access to our job database and other valuable resources.

**2** Refresh and improve your interviewing skills. Career Services staff offer mock (practice) interviews with valuable feedback. As the saying goes, “practice makes perfect.”

**3** Explore all career options, including possible relocation. Skills are transferrable and can be applied across many disciplines. Keep in mind that some areas of our country have been impacted to a lesser extent than others during this recession; do your research and find out which states' labor markets are healthier than others. Also, research what sectors are still hiring. The federal government and healthcare are great examples. Visit <http://www.makingthedifference.org> to see opportunities available with the federal government.

**4** Finally, network! Phone or e-mail your family, friends and acquaintances, and let them know that you are looking for a new position. Getting a lead, as well as a good word, from these sources can make a real difference. Pass your résumé on so they can forward it to their contacts. Reach out to the career center at the nearest college or university, and ask about their reciprocation agreement with your *alma mater*. While the offerings through that agreement will not likely encompass the full array of services available to that institution's native students, they will allow you access to some key tools through which to conduct a directed job search.



[www.nyssbdc.org](http://www.nyssbdc.org)

## William Brigham

If you're thinking about consulting, or starting your own business, William Brigham, director of UAlbany's Small Business Development Center ([www.nyssbdc.org](http://www.nyssbdc.org)), suggests that you:

**1** Consider self-employment. Skills acquired on the job often convert to a successful small business enterprise. With corporations downsizing professional staff to increase the bottom line, a high demand for management consultants exists. Another alternative is starting or acquiring your lifetime-dream business. Whether it's a home-based, online, retail, wholesale, manufacturing or service business, you need a solid, objective business plan. Use such resources as the Small Business Development Center, which offers business assistance, or your state's Self-Employment Assistance Program, which allows unemployed entrepreneurs to collect benefits while starting a business.

**2** Get the economic gloom and doom out of your head. Recessions are relatively short lived. All trade does not stop during a downturn, and many large companies are dropping smaller customers to concentrate on high-volume customers. This is one of many market niches that recessionary periods create.

**3** Assess your situation. A third-party review by your accountant or a friend, colleague, consultant or business advisor can identify financial or operational problems, and afford time to reverse downward trends. Small businesses can be agile and creative in initiating change, reacting quickly to cut costs, entering new markets, adjusting the marketing mix and so on. A Band-Aid now could prevent trauma later.



[www.cdclf.org](http://www.cdclf.org)

[www.albany.edu/business](http://www.albany.edu/business)

[www.albany.edu/education](http://www.albany.edu/education)

## Paul Stewart, B.A.'74

Paul Stewart, B.A.'74, manager of Training and Technical Assistance for the Capital District Community Loan Fund, Inc. ([www.cdclf.org](http://www.cdclf.org)), shares these tips:

**1** Do the business plan! Not doing one increases the chances of failure. A business plan is a road map that explains how you plan to organize the business and shows how you addressed such issues as who your principal competition is, how your business differs, who your customers are and how you will manage funds.

**2** Have a good idea of the resources, skills and added outreach your business needs, and look for inexpensive ways to address them. One example: An article in a local newspaper is a good advertisement for a business. And it's free.

**3** Familiarize yourself with changes in technology. The Internet can help you. More and more businesses are utilizing e-mail to contact and retain customers. Blogging will tell the world about your business, and share the latest news about your products or services. Facebook, MySpace and other social-networking sites can also attract customers and stimulate sales.

## Donald S. Siegel

Donald S. Siegel, dean of the School of Business ([www.albany.edu/business](http://www.albany.edu/business)), notes that the economic downturn is "the ideal time for would-be entrepreneurs, especially those who have sufficient financial capital. Perhaps that is why so many great firms – GE; Hewlett Packard; Disney; Microsoft; and more recently, Method, RF Micro Devices, and Clif Bar – were launched during recessions and depressions." As a would-be entrepreneur, you should:

**1** Focus on the customer. For example, many organizations are desperately trying to reduce costs, which can present opportunities for entrepreneurial firms.

**2** Provide unique value. That is how you will increase market share. Even when the economy is sour, people will purchase what they need and will be looking for greater value, which large firms may not be able to provide, since they have downsized.

**3** Be willing to devote your life to the new enterprise. Otherwise, you are likely to fail. This tip is independent of the business cycle, but passion is critical.

## Robert Bangert-Drowns

If you're considering a return to school, Robert Bangert-Drowns, acting dean of UAlbany's School of Education ([www.albany.edu/education](http://www.albany.edu/education)), recommends that you:

**1** Consider contacting faculty who teach in the area that interests you. Deans or department chairs can answer your questions about the program, areas of faculty expertise and the career options in the field, and compare those with your own goals, experiences and accomplishments.

**2** Go to school with an open mind. Students often come to higher education with expectations about what they want from it, and while it's great to have clear goals, they sometimes get in the way of learning. Pay attention to the many opportunities that will enrich you in ways you hadn't expected. Sometimes, pursuing a degree will awaken you to a hidden talent or a new interest.

**3** Leave your ego at the door. Take grades, even bad ones, as opportunities to learn, not statements about you as a person. Enjoy yourself. You may feel out of place at first, but it won't be long until you feel you've found your place in a course or a department.